Sherman Reservoir
2011 Fall Survey Summary

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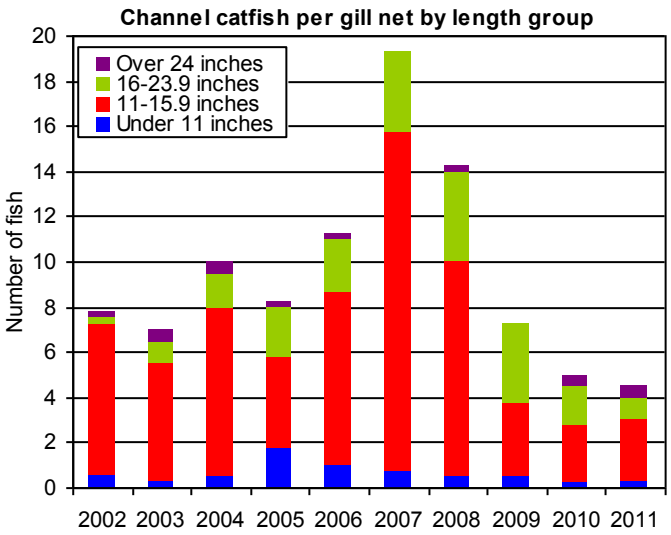
The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during September 2011 at Sherman Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Fish populations are sampled each fall at Sherman using gill and frame nets. Gill nets are used to sample fish species found primarily in open water, such as walleye, while frame nets are used to sample shoreline oriented species, such as crappie. The nets are set each year at approximately the same locations and dates as previous years. This reduces variability and allows for trend comparisons of species abundance and size distribution. The following graphs show the total number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs.

Channel Catfish

The channel catfish catch continues to remain lower than average. The catch of 4.5 fish per net is less than half the ten year average catch of 9.4 fish per net. Fish were sampled in all length categories, but most of the catch consisted of 11-24 inch catfish. The average length of catfish was 16.1 inches and the largest fish collected was 26 inches. The abundance of fish greater than 24 inches remains good.

While abundance is lower than average, channel catfish anglers should still find good angling opportunities for intermediate size catfish. Some large catfish are also present, allowing for fair opportunities to catch a trophy channel catfish.

The statewide daily bag limit for channel catfish is five fish.

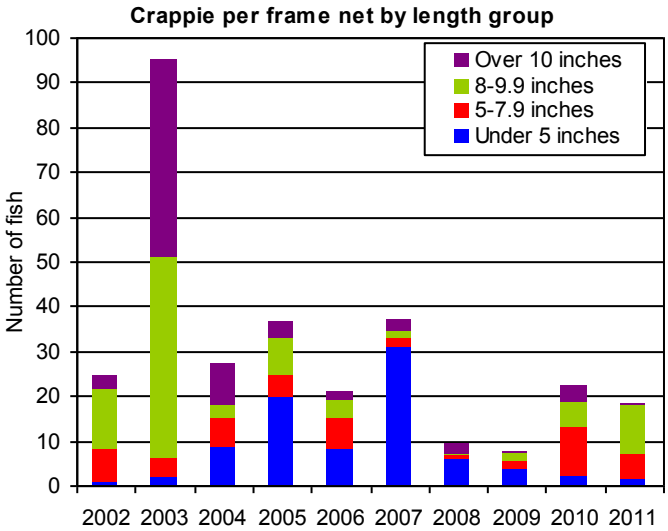


Crappie

Crappie catch continues to remain lower than the long term average at Sherman. The 2011 catch of 18 fish per net was similar to 2010 results, but considerably lower than the 10 year average of 30 fish per net. Most of the crappie sampled during the survey ranged in length from five to nine inches. The catch of fish larger than ten inches was the lowest observed in several years. The average length of crappie sampled was 8.3 inches and the largest fish were 11.5 inches.

Angler survey results indicated that anglers only harvested about 5,000 crappie in 2011, half of the average harvest. Based on netting results, anglers seeking crappie will likely find similar results in the upcoming year. Fair abundance of eight and nine inch crappie should begin contributing to the harvest during the latter months of 2012.

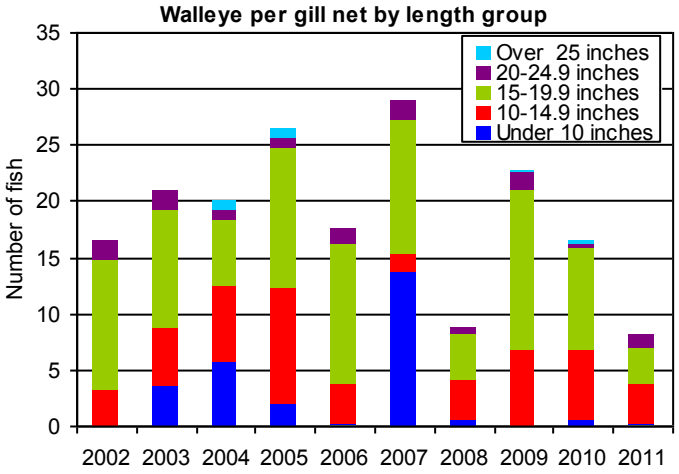
Crappie regulations for Sherman Reservoir include a 10-inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 15 fish.

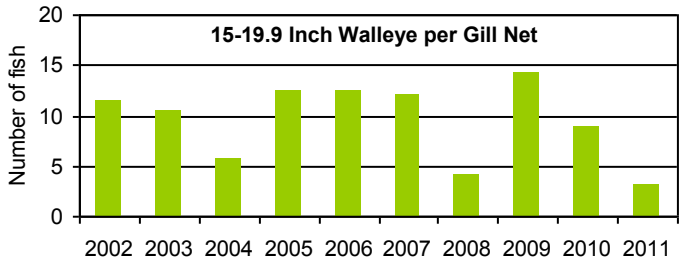


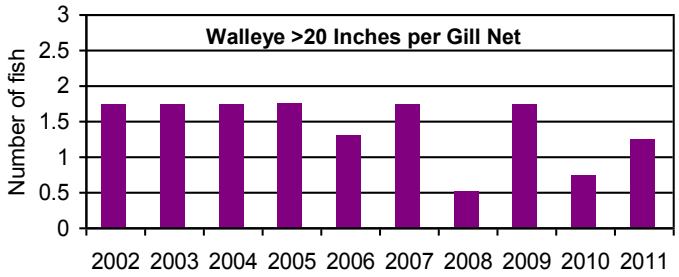
Walleye

The walleye gill net catch continues a downward trend, as catch dropped to levels not seen since 2008. The catch of 8.3 fish net was less than half the ten year average of 18.6 fish per net. Walleye were captured in all size classes, except no fish greater than 25 inches were collected. Fish from 10 to 20 inches represented most the sample. The average length of walleye collected was 15.3 inches. Most of the decline in the catch can be contributed to fewer fish in the 15 to 20 inch length category. Angler harvest was very high in 2011 (7,300 harvested) and it is the primary reason for the decline in this length category. Fish in this size category on average comprise 55% of the walleye sampled at Sherman, but they only made up 40% of the net catch in 2011. A strong 2009 year-class contributed to most of the fish less than 15 inches collected in the survey. These fish range from 12 to 15 inches and will contribute to harvest in 2012. A slight improvement was noticed in the abundance of fish greater than 20 inches, but no fish larger than 25 inches were caught.

Anglers caught and harvested record numbers of walleye during 2011. This high harvest rate was reflected in survey results last fall and will likely impact angling success during 2012. Anglers will still find good walleye opportunities, but will likely find fewer fish in the harvest slot. Chances of catching fish over 20 inches will be improved. The walleye regulation for Sherman includes a daily bag limit that may include two walleye greater than 15 inches but less than 20 inches and one walleye over 28 inches. There is a slot limit protecting walleye 20 through 28 inches.



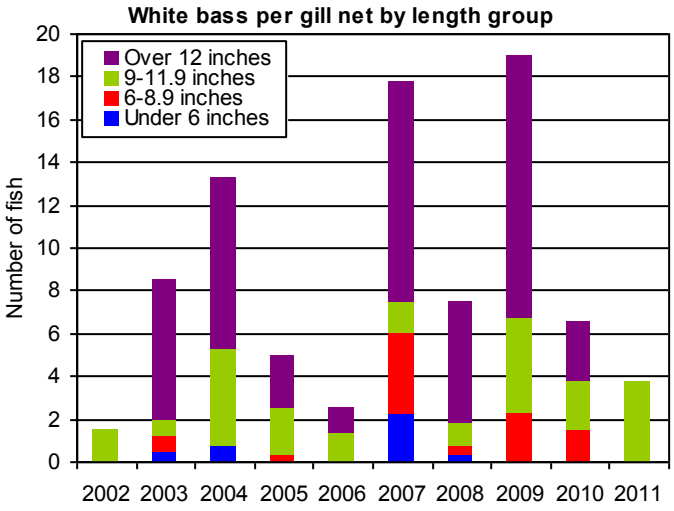




White Bass

There has been a major decline in the catch of white bass the past two years. The 2011 catch of 3.75 fish per net was the lowest in five years and is well below the ten year average of 8.5 fish per net. All white bass collected during the survey were in the 9 to 12 inch length category and had an average length of 10.4 inches. These fish were all from the 2009 year-class. This year-class will provide the bulk of the harvestable white bass for the next couple years. Another big year-class was produced in 2010, but unfortunately none of these fish were collected during the 2011 survey.

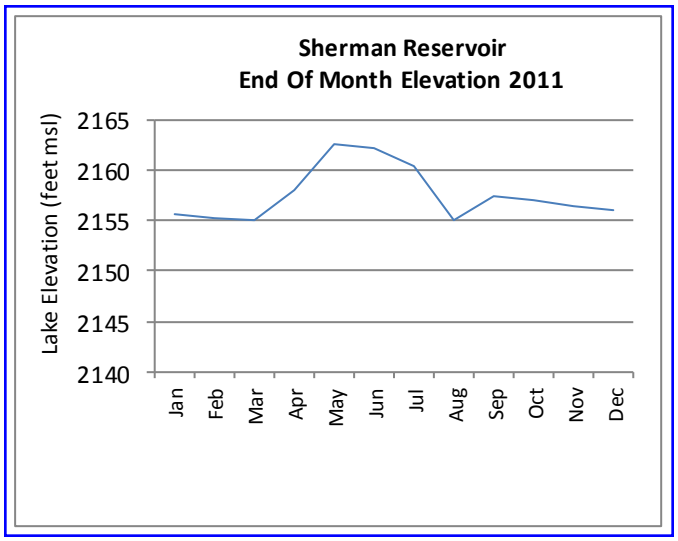
After having exceptional white bass fishing during the 2005-2010 time period, angler success has declined with the dwindling abundance of white bass. Anglers experienced only fair fishing for white bass during 2011, harvesting 4,300 white bass. Based on netting results, it is expected that angler success in 2012 will be similar to last years catch.

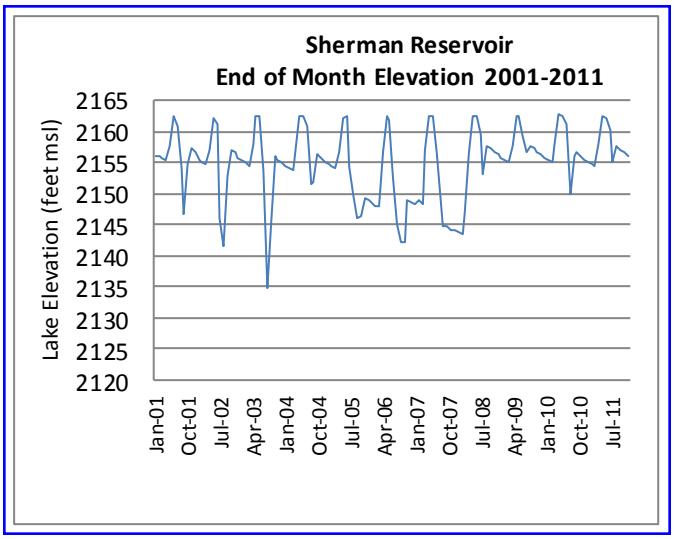


Sherman Reservoir — Additional Information

Fisheries Division will likely be conducting walleye spawn collections at Sherman during 2012. Depending on weather conditions, spawn collection will begin the last week of March or the first week of April and normally lasts for one to two weeks. Walleye are collected along the dam at night and disturbance to anglers is minimal. During 2011, there were approximately 272 quarts of eggs collected during spawn collection at Sherman Reservoir. Eggs were also collected at Lake McConaughy and Merritt Reservoirs. Anglers should also be aware that the water within 150 feet of the dam and the new walleye spawning reef near the west end of the dam is closed to all fishing from sunset to sunrise beginning April 1 and ending April 20.

Current lake elevations can be found on Farwell Irrigation District's website: **http://www.farwellid.com/index.html**. Wet weather conditions during the summer of 2011 greatly reduced irrigation demand and Sherman was only drawn down approximately seven feet.





Boaters at Sherman Reservoir are reminded to use caution to avoid the rock structures placed in the reservoir, especially during high water when structures may be partially under water. White posts with reflective tape mark all structures, with buoys and lights added at some sites.

An angler survey will be completed at Sherman Reservoir from April through October 2012. This survey is done in cooperation with the University of Nebraska -Lincoln Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Unit. The survey has been on-going since 1996 and has provided valuable information on angling pressure, catch rates, harvest rates, and numbers and types of fish caught. Anglers are encouraged to take the time to answer the questions from the creel clerk. Results from the 2011 creel survey can be found here: **http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/fishing/programs/sampling/default.asp**

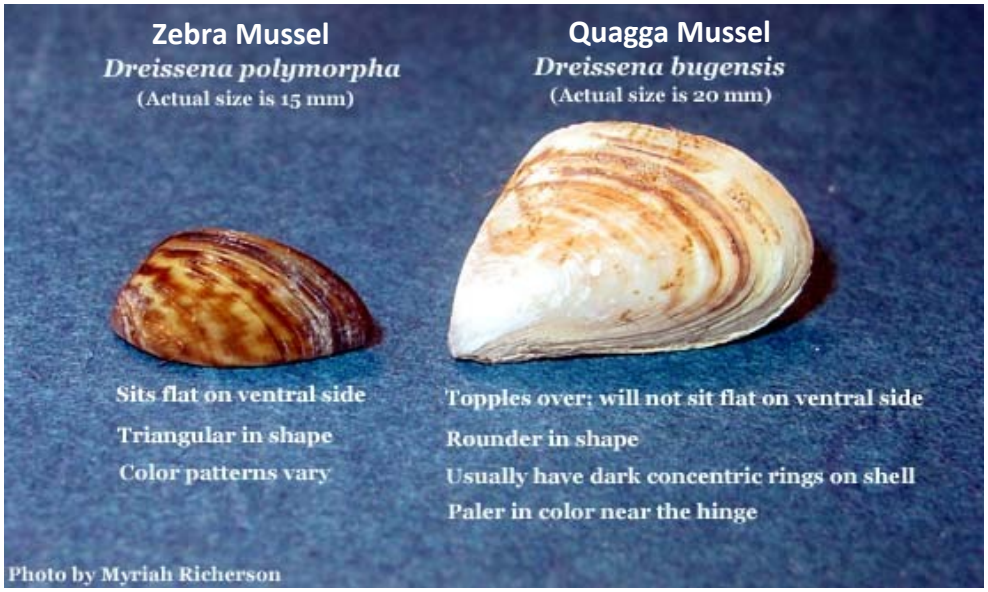
Scheduled fish stockings for 2012 include 140,000 walleye fingerlings and 950 advanced fingerling northern pike.

A detailed bathymetric map of Sherman Reservoir can be found on Nebraska Game and Parks Commission website: **http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/fishing/programs/lakemapping/pdfs/sherman.pdf**

Zebra & Quagga Mussels

Anglers and recreational boaters need to continue to be aware of zebra and quagga mussels while using Nebraska lakes. Monitoring for zebra mussels has been completed the last two years at Sherman Reservoir and fortunately no evidence of these invasive mussels have been found. Most of the other large reservoirs in Nebraska were also monitored during 2011, all resulting in negative results. Currently in Nebraska, zebra mussels have only been documented near Omaha at Offutt Air Force Base Lake, Zorinsky Lake, and the Missouri River. Invasive mussels have been documented in several neighboring states, such as Colorado, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa.

Invasive mussels will attach to almost any surface and have detrimental impacts on industry (power plants, water intakes, irrigation, etc), native fish and mussels, and recreational users (fouling boat motors, impacting beaches, etc). Invasive mussels cause an estimated $5 billion per year in economic impacts in the United States for monitoring and control efforts. Inadvertent transfer by humans is the major source of new infestation for zebra and quagga mussels; primarily by boats, boat trailers, and fishing gear. Boaters and anglers are reminded that it is important to **clean, drain and dry** their equipment and boats before moving to different bodies of water. Anglers and boaters are encouraged to educate themselves on these and other aquatic invasive species. An excellent source of information regarding invasive species can be found on the University of Nebraska's Invasive Species Project website: **http://snr.unl.edu/invasives/**.



For additional information about fisheries management at Sherman Reservoir please contact the NGPC Kearney office at 308-865-5310 or by email at the addresses listed below.

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